

What Else Can I Do?

Many people feel safer after making their homes more physically secure with new or better locks, more lighting, and alarm systems. People who live alone sometimes have family or friends stay over for a few nights. Some people get a watchdog. Some people work out strategies with neighbors to watch one another's properties more closely. Any preventive measures you do to make your home more secure will help you regain a sense of control.

Some people think about getting weapons or keeping their weapons loaded. Be very careful if you choose to get weapons. It's too easy for the wrong person to be harmed. For example when you're already "jumpy," having a loaded weapon in close reach could end in disaster if a loved-one comes home unexpectedly or late, or is sleep walking.

Call Your Police or Your County Sheriff's Office

Law enforcement agencies can help you take action. They may be able to give you burglary prevention tips and property identification kits, and they may assist with increased neighborhood patrols or neighborhood watch programs.

Help for Burglary Victims

A message from Attorney General
Tom Miller -

Burglary victims often suffer difficult and confusing feelings such as anger, increased fear, loss of trust in people, and sometimes even guilt or the feeling of "Am I going crazy?" This brochure is designed to help victims understand and cope with such feelings.

The Crime Victim Assistance Program of my office can refer you to local resources for counseling and support. Your sheriff or police can help you take steps to prevent burglary and help put your mind at ease.

Our Crime Victim Compensation Program can provide financial assistance for some crime-related expenses of burglary (although, by law, the program cannot pay for stolen property.) For example, the Compensation Program may be able to pay for burglary-related costs such as mental health counseling, the cost of replacing stolen or damaged medical supplies, and lost wages.

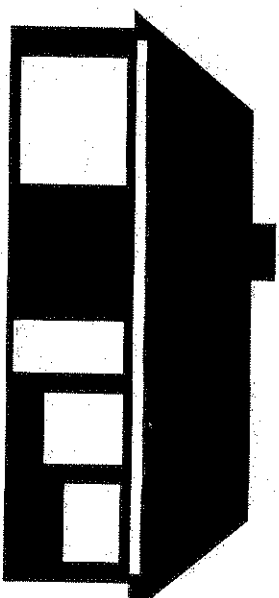
Please contact us if we can help in any way.

-Attorney General Tom Miller

Iowa Attorney General's
Crime Victim Assistance Division
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Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515-281-5044 or 1-800-373-5044
www.state.ia.us/government/ag/cvad

Information and Help For



Burglary Victims

Developed with the assistance of Polk
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Des Moines, Iowa

Attorney General Tom Miller
Iowa Department of Justice
Crime Victim Compensation Program

What Feelings Are Often Experienced By Burglary Victims?

Sense of Violation You may experience a sense of being violated. Your private space has been invaded. You may be disheartened that your personal possessions have been taken, damaged or handled by people you don't know or trust. Your home might not feel the same to you.

Anger And Frustration You may be furious at the burglars who took your personal items or things of great sentimental value. You may be frustrated with the police and legal system. You may become discouraged about the unfairness of it all.

Increased Fears You may experience increased fears. You may fear that it will happen to you again. You may be afraid of noises. You may be afraid of being alone in your home, especially at night. You may jump when the phone rings, someone knocks at the door, or a dog barks. You may be afraid that something worse will happen, such as the burglar will return to harm you or your family.

Loss Of Control You may experience an acute sense of helplessness. Your life may feel out of control. Your home may no longer feel safe because it has been changed by an act of violence. The police may be unable to do anything because there is not enough evidence. You may feel that no one can guarantee your safety again and life's illusion of control and safety has been shattered. For weeks after the burglary, your mind may seem focused on the aftermath (trying to figure out what is missing, filling out insurance forms, getting new locks,

etc.) You may have flashbacks of walking into your home and seeing the chaos, or you may have nightmares about the break-in. It may seem like the burglary has taken control of your life.

Sense Of Guilt, And "Why Me?" As a burglary victim you may feel guilty because you didn't lock all the doors, look all the windows, or leave the light on. You may feel guilty about not marking all your possessions, or not installing deadbolts or not asking a neighbor to watch your home. You may experience an intense need to know why this happened to you and your home. You may wonder what you could have done to prevent it. Due to your heightened awareness, each time you return home you may wonder if your house has been burglarized again.

Loss Of Trust In Other People You may experience a loss of basic trust in other people. You may become suspicious of strangers. You may suspect people in your neighborhood of being the burglars, perhaps because they are new or different. You may feel like isolating yourself from other people in an attempt to avoid contact with anyone you don't know well. If the person you think broke into your home is someone you know, you may feel a loss of faith in your own judgement.

Am I Going Crazy? As you experience difficult feelings, you may wonder if you are going crazy. You may wonder why you seem to be getting worse instead of better. You may never have known anyone else who experienced these things. You may wonder what is happening to you. You may wonder if you will ever get better.

Will These Feelings Ever Go Away?

All of these feeling and reactions are natural responses to the trauma of victimization. Your experience will vary from others, but most victims share many of these common responses.

The initial or crisis phase often lasts from three to six weeks. After these first weeks the intensity of your feeling and reactions will likely start to lighten. You will feel better after time has passed, but you probably will never forget the burglary.

You can help your recovery by keeping in touch with your feelings and talking about them with a good listener, someone who is non-judgemental. Avoiding your feelings may only delay your recovery from the crime.

Sources of Help Some people benefit from counseling to help them deal with the trauma of a burglary. The Crime Victim Compensation Program of the Attorney General's Office can suggest resources for counseling and support.

The Crime Victim Compensation Program can help with the following:

- Medical expenses
- Counseling Expenses
- Lost wages due to emotional or physical injury
- Replacement of medically necessary items, such as medications, wheelchairs, or eyeglasses.

Call (515) 281-5044 or 1-800-373-5044 to see if the Crime Victim Compensation Program can help you.